

REMARKS

The Office Action of **September 12, 2003**, has been received and its contents carefully noted. Applicant respectfully submits that this response is timely filed and fully responsive to the Office Action.

Claims 1-10 are pending in the present application. No claims are amended. Independent claims 1 and 10 and claims dependent therefrom are believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the reasons stated below.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejection

Claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over *Thomas* (WO 98/12089) in view of *Voss* (DE 4219101 A1). Applicant respectfully contends that independent claims 1 and 10 and claims dependent therefrom are clearly patentably distinct over *Thomas* and *Voss*, taken alone or in combination, for at least the reasons advanced below.

***Thomas* and *Voss* Fail to Disclose, Teach or Suggest Purging or Backflushing a Control Valve in the Manner Claimed**

Applicant respectfully contends that *Thomas* and *Voss*, taken alone or in combination, fail to disclose, teach or suggest each and every element defined by the pending claims 1-10. For example, independent claim 1 recites:

A vehicle air braking system including an air compressor, an air dryer, an air dryer control valve having a vent to atmosphere, a reservoir adapted to contain a quantity of dry air for use in regenerating desiccant of the air dryer and **means to exhaust dry air through the desiccant and control valve to atmosphere**, the system further including **control means sensitive to the operating condition of the vehicle and operable to cause regeneration of the desiccant and purging of the control valve when the vehicle engine is stopped**; and

independent claim 10 recites:

A method of regenerating an air dryer of a vehicle air braking system and purging a control valve of the air dryer at the end of the working day, the method comprising the steps of:
determining that the vehicle engine is stopped;
connecting a regeneration reservoir of dry air to the air dryer;
connecting the air dryer and control valve to atmosphere; and
backflushing the air dryer and control valve to remove moisture therefrom.

Thus, the invention recited in independent claims 1 and 10 includes the feature of purging of both the desiccant and the control valve, when the engine is stopped.

By contrast, the present Office Action correctly admits “Thomas does not disclose purging the air dryer when the engine is stopped.” Moreover, even if *Voss* disclosed such a feature, neither *Thomas* nor *Voss* disclose, teach or suggest “means to exhaust dry air through the desiccant and control valve to atmosphere ... including control means ... operable to cause regeneration of the desiccant and purging of the control valve when the vehicle engine is stopped,” as recited in independent claim 1, and “determining that the vehicle engine is stopped; and ... backflushing the air dryer and control valve to remove moisture therefrom,” as recited in independent claim 10. Specifically, even if *Voss* disclosed purging of the air dryer (16), *Voss*, nonetheless, fails to disclose, teach or suggest purging either of the control valves (5 and 29), and *Thomas* fails to cure such deficiencies in *Voss*.

By purging of both the desiccant and the control valve, when the engine is stopped, as recited in independent claims 1 and 10, advantageously, “[m]oisture which may be present in venting ducts, control valve passageways or in the air dryer body is also expelled, which reduces the possibility of the subsequent operation of the venting system being hampered or prevented by ice” (see, e.g., Specification, page 2, lines 13-15). By contrast, *Thomas* and *Voss* both are silent with respect to the noted features and advantages.

The Dependent Claims are Allowable over *Thomas* and *Voss*

Dependent claim 2-9 are allowable over *Thomas* and *Voss*, taken alone or in combination, on their own merits and for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claim 1.

The Non-Applied References

The references that have been cited, but not applied by the Examiner, have been taken into consideration during formulation of this response. However, since these references were not considered by the Examiner to be of sufficient relevance to apply against any of the claims, no detailed comments thereon is believed to be warranted at this time.

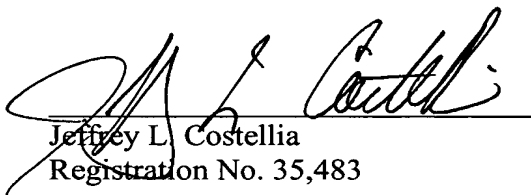
Conclusion

Therefore, it is believed that independent claims 1 and 10 and claims dependent therefrom are clearly patentably distinct over *Thomas* and *Voss*, taken alone or in combination. In view of the foregoing remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-10 is earnestly solicited.

Having responded to all rejections set forth in the outstanding Office Action, it is submitted that the claims are now in condition for allowance. An early and favorable Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited. In the event that the Examiner is of the opinion that a brief telephone or personal interview will facilitate allowance of one or more of the above claims, the Examiner is courteously requested to contact Applicant's undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

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